

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-03 PM-03 DODE-00 DPW-01 IO-03 EUR-10

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R 231120Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6342

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 15269

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, MARR, VS

SUBJECT: MR IV SITREP FOR AUGUST 22, 1973

FOLLOWING MSG RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL CAN THO AUG 22, 1973

REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO.

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAN THO 0670

LIMIDS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: MOPS, MARR, VS

SUBJECT: MR IV SITREP FOR AUGUST 22, 1973

1. SUMMARY: MR IV MILITARY ACTIVITY CONTINUED TO
DECLINE. DINH TUONG REMAINED THE PRINCIPAL SEAT OF
WAR IN THE DELTA. THE RF SUFFERED A REVERSAL IN AN XUYEN. THE VC
EXTRACTED A HIGH TOLL FROM A BAC LIEU RICE CONVOY. AN RF VICTORY
IN VINH BINH IS ILLUMINATED BY NEWLY REPORTED DETAILS. THE
VINH LONG GVN/JMC EXPLAINED HIS GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF
REPORTING CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS TO THE ICCS. PRESIDENT THIEU
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WILL VISIT CAN THO AUGUST 23. END SUMMARY

2. SECURITY SITUATION: (A) MR IV REPORTED 25 ALLEGED VC-INITIATED INCIDENTS AUGUST 20 AND 21 INCIDENTS THE FOLLOWING DAY. EXACTLY HALF THE REPORTED INCIDENTS TOOK PLACE IN DINH TUONG. CHUONG THIEN REMAINED QUIET. RVNAF SUFFERED 28 KILLED AND 208 WOUNDED DURING THE TWO-DAY PERIOD. ACCORDING TO IV CORPS, THE VC/NVA LOST 106 KILLED AND ELEVEN CAPTURED.

(B) DINH TUONG REMAINED THE PRINCIPAL SEAT OF ARMED CONFLICT IN THE DELTA AUGUST 20-21, ALTHOUGH MILITARY ACTIVITY FELL OFF SHARPLY FROM LAST WEEK'S INTENSE FIGHTING. SECTOR REPORTED 21 INCIDENTS AUGUST 20 AND 14 THE FOLLOWING DAY. NO SIGNIFICANT GROUND ACTIVITY WAS REPORTED, ALTHOUGH FRIENDLY FORCES AUGUST 20 WITHDREW FROM PHU HUYEN OUTPOST, CAI BE DISTRICT, "UNDER PRESSURE" OTHERWISE UNDEFINED. THE INSECURE SITUATION IN DINH TUONG WAS ILLUSTRATED BY TWO INCIDENTS ON NORMALLY SAFE ROADS. ON ROUTE 29, WHICH CONNECTS CAI LAY AND MOC HOA, A JEEP WAS STRUCK BY A B-40 ROUND, INJURING AN RF SOLDIER. A DISABLED VETERAN WAS KILLED AND TWO OTHER CIVILIANS PROBABLY KIDNAPPED IN AN INCIDENT DURING THE NIGHT OF AUGUST 19 ON HIGHWAY 4.

(C) AN ELEMENT OF THE 4TH COMPANY, 491ST RF BATTALION, FELL INTO A NIGHT AMBUSH ON AUGUST 20 IN NAM CAN DISTRICT, AN XUYEN PROVINCE. THE RF, WHICH LOST EIGHT KILLED, THREE WOUNDED, AND SEVERAL WEAPONS, MAY HAVE BEEN THE VICTIM OF THE 2001 VC LOCAL FORCE COMPANY, WHICH OPERATES IN THE AREA. THE QUAN LONG (CA MAU) GVN/JMC HAS FILED A COMPLAINT ON THE INCIDENT TO THE ICCS.

(D) BAC LIEU PROVINCE CHIEF COL. NGUYEN NGOC DIEP TOLD THE AMERICAN PROVINCE REPRESENTATIVE AUGUST 20 THAT ELEMENTS OF THE VC PHU LOI I BATTALION HAD RECENTLY INTERCEPTED A SAIGON-BOUND RICE CONVOY IN WESTERN VINH CHAU DISTRICT AND HAD EXTRACTED A TRIBUTE OF 7200 KILOS OF MILLED RICE. THE CONVOY OF SIX BARGES CARRYING 1000 TONS OF RICE HAD LEFT BAC LIEU CITY WITHOUT INFORMING THE PROVINCE CHIEF

AND WITHOUT MILITARY ESCORT, ALTHOUGH DIEP SAID HE HAD URGED RICE MERCHANTS TO REQUEST SECURITY. A SUBSEQUENT SECTOR
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MILITARY OPERATION FAILED TO RECOVER THE LOST RICE.

(E) KIEN PHONG PROVINCE REPORTED 28 VC-INITIATED INCIDENTS FOR THE WEEK AUGUST 13-20. AMONG THESE WERE 13 GROUND ATTACKS AND ELEVEN SHELLINGS. MOST OF THE ACTIVITY OCCURRED IN KIEN VAN AND HONG NGU DISTRICTS. SECTOR REPORTED THREE RVNAF KILLED, 19 WOUNDED, AND ONE MISSING DURING THE WEEK, WHILE CLAIMING NINE VC KILLED.

(F) ADDITIONAL DETAILS HAVE SURFACED WHICH ILLUMINATE A GVN VICTORY IN NGAI TRUNG HAMLET, TAP NGAI VILLAGE, TIEU CAN DISTRICT, VINH BINH AUGUST 19 (CAN THO 0667). IN A HELIBORNE OPERATION ASSISTED BY AIRSTRIKES, THE 404TH RF BATTALION AND A SECTOR RECONNAISSANCE PLATOON DECIMATED THE VC 306TH BATTALION, PROBABLY ELIMINATING THE VC UNIT AS AN EFFECTIVE FIGHTING FORCE. THE RF KILLED 65 VC AND CAPTURED SEVERAL WEAPONS AND DOCUMENTS. THE NEXT DAY, RF SEARCHED THE BATTLEFIELD AND KILLED 19 MORE VC. THIS SUCCESSFUL RF OPERATION FOLLOWED A REVERSAL SUFFERED AUGUST 18 IN THE SAME HAMLET. THE 471 RF BATTALION, SENT TO RELIEVE THE SURROUNDED CHUA HOI OUTPOST, WAS AMBUSHED BY THE VC AND SUFFERED 20 KILLED AND 20 WOUNDED, INCLUDING THE BATTALION COMMANDER. THE TIDES OF WAR CONTINUED TO EBB AND FLOW IN VINH BINH. ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE 404TH RF VICTORY AUGUST 19 IN NGAI TRUNG HAMLET, A VC FORCE CAPTURED O RUNG OUTPOST, PHUOC HUNG VILLAGE, TRA CU DISTRICT, KILLING 17 PF DEFENDERS.

3. ICCS/JMC: THE VINH LONG GVN/JMC TOLD A VICE CONSUL THAT HIS GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON REPORTING ALLEGED CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS TO THE ICCS IS DETERMINED BY THE NUMBER OF CASUALTIES SUFFERED IN THE INCIDENT. IF FIVE OR MORE CIVILIANS OR SOLDIERS ARE KILLED IN AN INCIDENT, THE JMC WILL REQUEST AN INVESTIGATION BY THE ICCS. IF THE VC KILL LESS THAN FIVE, THE JMC WILL REPORT THE INCIDENT TO THE ICCS FOR THEIR INFORMATION ONLY. AT THE SAME TIME, THE JMC WILL REQUEST AN INVESTIGATION OF ANY INCIDENT WHICH RESULTED IN CASUALTIES SUFFERED BY GVN OFFICIALS.

4. GVN ACTIVITIES; PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU WILL MEET IN CAN THO AUGUST 23 WITH ALL MR IV PROVINCE CHIEFS TO DISCUSS THE RICE SITUATION.

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